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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 NDJAMENA 000517

SENSITIVE
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SUBJECT: CHADIAN OPPOSITION PARTIES COMPLAIN GOC NOT
IMPLEMENTING AUGUST 13TH ACCORD

REF: A. NDJAMENA 000510

1B. 07 NDJAMENA 675

SUMMARY

11. (SBU) The main association of Chadian opposition parties, the CPDC, complained to the Ambassador that the GoC is not implementing the August 13 Accord (the electoral reform agreement signed in August 2007) in good faith, and that therefore credible elections could not be held in 2009. They made a pitch for the international community to pressure the Government to honor its agreements in order to avoid further conflict. The Ambassador promised to consult with other like-minded countries to see what might be done. The opposition representatives also expressed dissatisfaction with the results of the commission set up to investigate the aftermath of the February 2008 rebel attack on N,Djamena, and the death of CPDC leader Ibni Saleh.

12. (SBU) We agree that the CPDC,s concerns are real and that lack of political will on the part of the ruling party and the Deby Regime are retarding progress on the electoral process. But EU Ambassador Desesquelles, the architect of the August 13 Accord and the prime mover behind the electoral reform process, believes that credible elections are still possible in 2009 or early 2010 (Ref A). We will continue to consult with the EU and other supporters of the democratic transition in Chad to see how we can impress on the GoC how important credible elections are to the international community represented in Chad. END SUMMARY.

13. (SBU) Salibou Garba, the Acting Spokesman for the main association of opposition parties, the CPDC (Coordination des Partis politique pour la Defense de la Constitution), called on the Ambassador on November 3 to complain that the GoC is not implementing the August 13 Accord (the electoral reform agreement signed in August 2007) in good faith. Garba was accompanied by Gangnon Mbaimbal, Deputy Spokesman of the CPDC,s Comite de Liaison. Although Garba is also the Spokesman for the Comite de Suivi (Implementation Committee), he was clearly coming in his role as CPDC Spokesman. A/DCM and A/PolOff sat in on the meeting.

ALL SEVEN DRAFT LAWS STUCK IN CABINET

14. (SBU) Garba said none of the seven draft laws produced by the Comite de Suivi (Implementation Committee) have been sent to the National Assembly for approval. Most importantly, the two draft laws that are key to holding democratic elections) those dealing with the electoral commission and the electoral code) are still stuck in the Council of

Ministers, although they were agreed by the Comite de Suivi (in which both the ruling party (MPS) and the GoC have representation) in January 2008. Garba said the GoC wants to modify the drafts in ways that contradict the August 13 Accord, and are therefore unacceptable to the opposition. Referring disparagingly to the appointment of a new cabinet under Prime Minister Youssuff Saleh Abbas in April of this year, which was supposed to bring good governance, Garba noted that in five months the GoC has not been able to finalize a draft.

REFORM IS A PROCESS, BUT PROGRESS IS ESSENTIAL

¶ 15. (SBU) Garba noted that the August 13 Accord envisioned holding legislative elections in 2009, but that is no longer feasible in his view. The CPDC understands that reform is a process, and that it might take a few years, but there must be progress -- which the opposition doesn't see. He went on to say that good elections would require not only the right laws, but also the right environment; they could not be held in the current militarized atmosphere. The opposition does not believe elections should be held just for the sake of holding them.

¶ 16. (SBU) Garba said there was no news on the census; UNFPA might finish the overall enumeration in 2009. He went on to underscore the importance of the census for the holding of fair elections, asserting that statisticians place the number of eligible voters between three and three and a half million, while the GoC estimate is close to six million.

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(NOTE: In the 2006 presidential election, the GoC claimed the electorate comprised 5.8 million voters.)

RESULTS OF COMMISSION D, ENQUETE UNSATISFACTORY

¶ 17. (SBU) The secondary issue the CPDC raised was its dissatisfaction with the Commission d'Enquête (Commission of Inquiry) to investigate the aftermath of the February 2008 rebel attacks, and especially the disappearance of opposition coalition spokesman, Ibni Oumar Mahamat Saleh, now presumed dead. Garba repeated the opposition's demand for the return of Ibni's body to his family for a proper burial, and for answers. &We have a right to know who did what,⁸ he said. The opposition was dissatisfied with the Commission d'Enquête, as well as the follow-up mechanism controlled by the Presidency, which could not even trace the vehicle in which Ibni disappeared, although people identified the car that took him away. Broadening the scope of his complaint, Garba added that war crimes and rape are difficult to accept.

¶ 18. (SBU) Salibou advised the Ambassador that the CPDC was going to the international community (he had already called on the EU, French and AU Ambassadors, and the UNDP Res Rep), rather than to the press, noting that the opposition parties had only entered into dialogue with the GoC due to the involvement of the international community. Support was needed now more than ever to get the process back on track.

¶ 19. (SBU) A/DCM asked about allies within the current Government, but Garba dismissed them (including the President of the National Assembly and the Prime Minister), saying that even if their hearts are in the right place, they cannot do anything, as the GoC is a one-man show. Unless President Deby wants something done, it will not be done.

¶ 10. (SBU) At that point, Garba's companion, Mbaimbal, who had seemed disengaged until then, came to life. &People have lost confidence in Chadian democracy, which is why the rebels

exist. When they changed the Constitution, people got discouraged.⁸ Citing the Government's renegeing on its agreement with the World Bank as evidence that the GoC cannot be trusted, Mbaimbal emphasized that the opposition wants the international community &with us⁸ in the Comite de Suivi. (NOTE: the international community participates in the Comite de Suivi as observers.) If the GoC doesn't honor its agreements, war will come, Mbaimbal warned.

¶11. (SBU) Garba asserted that the Sirte agreement is a step backward, in that it bought off individuals and held no hope for widespread inclusion in the political process, and that the Dakar Agreement (March 2008) is now dead.

COMMENT

¶12. (SBU) We agree that the CPDC's concerns are real and that lack of political will on the part of the ruling party and the Deby Regime are retarding progress on the electoral process. But EU Ambassador Desesquelles, the architect of the August 13 Accord and the prime mover behind the electoral reform process, believes that credible elections are still possible in 2009 or early 2010 (Ref A). We will continue to consult with the EU and other supporters of the democratic transition in Chad to see how we can impress on the GoC how important credible elections are to the international community represented in Chad.

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